

## Montana Environmental Health Association



February 1, 2011

Representative Gordon R. Hendrick  
Natural Resources Committee  
Montana House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 200400  
Helena, Montana 59620-0400

RE: Letter of Opposition House Bill 352 – Revise laws relating to water quality standards and provide alternatives

Dear Representative Hendrick, Chair and Members of the Committee:

Dear Mr. Hendrick and Committee Members:

The Montana Environmental Health Association is an organization of public health professionals such as registered sanitarians, environmental consultants, hydrologists, health educators and others dedicated to protecting public health as it relates to our everyday environment. Many of our professionals work in areas such as food safety, water/wastewater management, air quality and public health complaints. Many of our members are involved with ensuring eating and drinking establishments provide safe food and water to their customers.

Montana bars and restaurants are required by State and Federal law to provide drinkable water to their patrons. Any use of bottled water should be a very temporary solution to a specific problem, used only while the problem is being remediated. Bottled water should absolutely not be seen as a permanent solution for not meeting maximum contaminant levels in water. Bottled water does not protect customers from, for example, washing hands in coliform contaminated water. Nor does it address food preparation such as salad washing, ice making or dishwashing.

Safe water is fundamental in protecting public health from diseases. The use of bottled water in any public water system makes Montana appear in the company of any number of second or third world countries that are unable to provide their citizens one of the basic human needs – that of a clean and drinkable water supply. Allowing this proposed bill to go forward is equivalent to allowing the public to return to inadequate sanitation levels seen in the eighteenth century when U.S. citizens were in dire need of adequate potable water. Please consider the affect on public health this bill may have.

This Association opposes this proposed legislation and asks that you do also.

Sincerely,

Christine Hughes  
Registered Sanitarian  
MEHA President